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BR 1736(27)
C.B. 3081 (27)

BATTLE SUMMARY No. 35

THE INVASION OF SICILY

OPERATION "HUSKY"

No 27.

1946

27

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SICILY



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BATTLE SUMMARY No. 35

THE INVASION OF SICILY

OPERATION "HUSKY"

N.I.D. Record Copy

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ACTICAL AND STAFF DUTIES DIVISION
(HISTORICAL SECTION),
NAVAL STAFF,
ADMIRALTY, S.W.

February 1946.

S.D. 21/46

BATTLE SUMMARY No. 35

MEDITERRANEAN OPERATIONS

THE INVASION OF SICILY

OPERATION "HUSKY"

10th July to 17th August, 1943

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OPERATION "HUSKY"

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THE INVASION OF SICILY

OPERATION "HUSKY"

PART I

PLAN AND ORDERS FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ATTACKING FORCES

CHAPTERS I TO III

SECTIONS 1-19

INVASION OF SICILY

10th July, 1943

EX AFRICA SEMPER ALIQUID NOVI

CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTORY

On the 14th January, 1943, the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the President of the United States of America, together with the chiefs of staffs of both countries, met in conference at Casablanca. In attendance were the commanders-in-chief of the Allied forces in the Mediterranean, North Africa, the Middle East and the Chief of Combined Operations.

One object of the Conference was to decide the strategic policy to be followed after the final defeat and ejection of the enemy from North Africa.

At the time the 1st Army in Tunisia was holding strong enemy forces there, while the 8th Army in pursuit of the beaten enemy retreating from Cyrenaica, was driving Rommel's army from the Buerat position before occupying Tripoli on 22nd January.

It was decided at the Conference, that in order to open through-communications in the Mediterranean, the next offensive step should be the occupation of the Island of Sicily as a base for future operations against Italy.

In broad outline a scheme of operations was concerted for the invasion of Sicily by the combined forces of the Allied Nations. The authorities concerned were charged to prepare detailed plans, which would be co-ordinated by a planning staff appointed for the purpose.

The operation, which was termed "Husky," entailed the employment of all arms of the services of Great Britain, the United States of America and Allied Nations. It was an undertaking of the first magnitude, involving in the initial assault force, as stated in round figures by Mr. Roosevelt on 28th August, 1943—some 3,000 ships (including landing craft), 160,000 men, 14,000 vehicles, 600 tanks and 1,800 guns.

This great force was assembled and exercised prior to embarkation at bases separated by thousands of miles, in Great Britain, the United States, North Africa and Egypt. The convoys transporting it were protected on passage and their arrivals timed to fall exactly together in order to achieve that measure of local surprise, which in all sea-borne invasions constitutes so vital a factor of success.

In the original plan it was hoped, that the enemy would be cleared from North Africa by the beginning of May and that preparations would be sufficiently completed to open the assault on Sicily during the moonlight period of June. Eventually the date had to be advanced to the corresponding moonlight period in July.

2. THE ENEMY FORCES

Naval

The strength of the Italian naval forces, as estimated on 12th July, was formidable enough. To avoid air attack the ships had been distributed to various ports, but the main strength was in the north at Genoa and Spezia, and in the south at Taranto. The state of the fleet was as follows :—

	Effective'	Non-effective	Totals
Battleships	3 (<i>Littorios</i>)	1 (<i>Littorio</i>)	4
Battleships	3 (<i>Dorias</i>)	1 (<i>Doria</i>)	4
Aircraft carriers	—	3	3
8-in. cruisers	—	2	2
6-in. cruisers	6	—	6
5.3-in. cruisers	1	3	4
Destroyers	32	—	32
Torpedo boats	16	—	16
Submarines	48	—	48
	} Operational strength } unknown		

There were also some 115 motor gunboats and motor torpedo boats and 27 sloops and escort vessels at various ports, with an unknown number of minesweepers and minelaying vessels.

In addition to the Italian forces some 20 German U-Boats were in the Mediterranean, of which two were in the eastern part.

The number of small German craft, such as E- and R-Boats or other types was not known definitely. It was thought that there were six in the Aegean and six at Toulon, but the total number was known to be very much greater, possibly as many as 30–35 E-Boats.

Strategical Considerations

It remained to be seen whether the invasion of Sicily, bastion of the so-called European fortress, would spur the Italian fleet to action. Strategically, its position was weak, the main bodies being very widely separated, but though short of cruisers and destroyers it was able to muster a force powerful enough to strike a heavy blow at an invasion armada before or after the actual assault. On the other hand, the policy of reliance on the activities of light craft, submarines and air power, had, as in the previous 37 months, proved to be a failure. Unless at this critical moment determined efforts were made to force a conclusion with the full weight of naval power, the tide of invasion would roll inevitably on, gathering strength until all Italy was finally submerged in irretrievable disaster.

The Enemy's Military Strength

It was estimated that the enemy military forces in Sicily were :—

Italian	..	4 first line divisions.
		5 second line divisions for static or coastal defence.
German	..	1 division.

Actually the enemy's strength appears to have been considerably greater, and during the campaign three German divisions were identified.

It was known that considerable efforts had been made to guard against a sea-borne invasion by the construction of batteries, gun and second line positions, machine gun posts, pill boxes, wire, anti-tank and mine defences, etc., of varying strength to protect the ports and beaches along the coast. These were assumed to be manned by troops with established lookout and Radar posts. Reserves of mobile troops held in suitable positions could be expected to move in any threatened direction.

The Enemy's Air Strength

The following estimate of the enemy's air strength covers the number of aircraft available in Sicily, Sardinia and Italy. Based chiefly on reconnaissance reports of various dates it can only be regarded as approximately correct for 10th July.

	German Air Force	Italian Air Force	Total
Fighters	280	560	840
Bombers	410	275	685
Others	50	215	265
	740	1,050	1,790

The effective operational strength was estimated as being 1,100 aircraft.

The serviceability of the German aircraft was held to be higher than that of the Italian (65 per cent. against 45 per cent), and the Italians were far inferior in efficiency and sustained operational value. It was expected, nevertheless, that the Italian fighter aircraft would put up a determined defence over their home bases. The torpedo bomber force had never entirely recovered from its heavy losses sustained during the attacks on the last two eastbound Malta convoys in 1942.

3. FORMULATION OF THE OPERATIONAL PLANS

(Ref. Plans 1, 4, 19)

On the return of the Commander-in-Chief from the Casablanca Conference, Admiral Sir B. H. Ramsay, K.C.B., M.V.O., who was serving as Deputy Naval Commander, Expeditionary Force (D.N.C.X.F.), was called to Algiers and informed of his nomination as Naval Commander, Eastern Task Force. He was entrusted with the formulation of outline plans for the forthcoming operation "Husky." For this purpose, on his return to London, Admiral Ramsay collected a staff and arranged the appointments to subordinate commands. The general plans of the operation were examined in consultation with the Chiefs of Staff Committee. Arrangements were made for shipping personnel and stores to the Middle East in Convoy W.S.28 (United Kingdom-Middle East and India (Military)). Assurances were received that additional craft would be made available and have priority over other commitments.

With a first flight of five staff officers, he arrived on 2nd March, in Cairo, and set up his headquarters. The division of responsibility for mounting the operation in the Middle East was agreed upon as follows :—

(A) *Commander-in-Chief, Levant*¹

- (1) To mount the assaults of the Naval task force in the Middle East.
- (2) To assist the D.N.C.X.F. in training the forces by providing facilities.

(B) *Flag Officer, Commanding Red Sea and Canal Area*²

- (1) To provide the additional facilities required in the canal area for mounting the operation.
- (2) To administer personnel and shipping in conjunction with the D.N.C.X.F. and sea transport authorities.

(C) *Deputy Naval Commander Expeditionary Force*

- (1) Training of the assault forces.
- (2) Priority of loading and selection of naval stores and equipment in convoys.

(D) *Chairman of the Directorate of Combined Operations, Middle East*³

- (1) Executive charge of naval training of forces until taken over by the Task Group commanders.
- (2) Arrangement of training programmes subject to the requirements of the Task Group commanders.

The Original Outline Plan

It was proposed at first to land at two places in Sicily ; viz. : (a) in the vicinity of Palermo at the north-western extremity of the island, and (b) in the vicinity of Syracuse and Catania at the south-eastern corner.

The original plan was to land : one division in the Acid area, south of Syracuse ; one brigade at Bark South, on the Pachino Peninsula ; one division at Cent near Pozzalo ; one division at Dime, near Gela ; and on D + 3 one division at Kilt, south of Catania ; three American divisions would carry out an assault in the north-west of the Island. (See Plans 1 and 4.) This plan did not meet with approval, General Dempsey (deputising for General Montgomery) in agreement with Admiral Ramsay considered that it would not fulfil the military requirements of the task to be performed by the troops after landing. The forces allotted were inadequate, too dispersed, and the rate of build-up was too slow.

Several conferences were held during March, with General Montgomery, at Medenine, with the commanders-in-chief at Algiers and at Cairo, supplemented by appreciations received from the joint planning staff in London and the Allied force headquarters planning staff. The solutions proposed were not satisfactory to all, consequently detailed planning was brought almost to a standstill. The principal alteration proposed was to cancel the American landing in the north-west of Sicily and transfer their forces to the south-east of Sicily,

¹ (1) Acting Admiral Sir H. Harwood, K.C.B., C.B.E., to 23rd March, 1943.

(2) Acting Admiral Sir R. Leatham, K.C.B., 24th March to 4th June, 1943.

(3) Acting Admiral Sir J. H. Cunningham, K.C.B., M.V.O., from 5th June.

² Vice-Admiral R. H. C. Hallifax, C.B.

³ Acting Rear-Admiral L. E. H. Maund, C.B.E.

a measure largely dictated by the lack of shipping and landing craft. After further exchanges of views between the widely-separated commanders, an amended plan was put forward by Allied force headquarters.

The proposals in this were for two divisions to assault at Acid: the additional division coming from the United Kingdom, and for the New Zealand division to assault at Cent in lieu of the 56th Division which had been sent to Tunisia. There were, however, naval routeing objections to a division from the United Kingdom assaulting at Acid alongside the 5th Division from the Middle East. An alternative proposal was therefore made for the United Kingdom division to assault at Cent, while the 5th and New Zealand divisions, *ex Middle East*, assaulted at Acid. The change was agreed upon and additional craft were allocated on 22nd April. This plan was subjected to further alteration, General Montgomery, on his arrival in Cairo on 23rd April, decided that the Eastern Task Force was too dispersed, as he had not enough troops to land simultaneously at Acid, Cent and Dime. He recommended increased concentration to be achieved by landing two divisions at Acid, a brigade at Bark East, one division at Bark South, and one division at Bark West. The assaults at Cent and Dime would be discarded. As this would probably delay the capture of the Cent and Dime airfields,¹ the air commander-in-chief had to be consulted.

Proposal to Concentrate the Assaults on the South-East and South Coasts of Sicily

At a conference in Algiers on 28th April, after further exchanges of views, General Montgomery, in a completely convincing exposition, proposed to concentrate all the assaults on the south-east and south coasts. For the capture of the ports and airfields he said he would require another two assaulting divisions. As all the British shipping resources were fully allotted, the only solution was to employ United States troops and shipping. On 4th May these proposals were approved by the Allied commander-in-chief.

By this time the formulation of a plan had occupied two and a half months, an undesirable delay, arising from the pre-occupation of the three commanders-in-chief in active prosecution of the North African campaign.

On 12th May, it was settled that the 1st Canadian Division (Bark West) should assault on D-day, not D + 1 as originally proposed.

The foregoing outline indicates the difficulties that beset detailed planning until the uncertainties and delays associated with the basic plan itself had been resolved. Another cause of delay arose from the distances between the various headquarters.

The D.N.C.X.F. remarks that the lack of adequate R.A.F. representation in Cairo caused uncertainty regarding the air plan. Until its final issue, it proved impossible to obtain a clear statement of what fighter cover might be expected over the shipping on D-day and thereafter. While it was recognized that the air plan depended on the degree of air superiority obtained prior to D-day, it was felt that a more definite forecast, or alternative forecasts of probabilities in the air, should have been available to the Eastern Task Force.

Eventually, as the target date was advanced from June to July, sufficient time was available in which to complete the plans and make out operation orders. It was sometimes unavoidable to anticipate decisions and issue orders in advance of those of the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean. This resulted in an overlapping in the orders issued, particularly in those of the Rear-Admiral, Force "V".

¹ At Comiso, Biscari and Ponte Olivo.

The outline plan was drawn up by the D.N.C.X.F. by 7th May, and the operation orders were flown to the United Kingdom on 11th June. It was inevitable, that many amendments should be necessary to orders written six weeks and issued four weeks before D-day. Grave concern was felt as to whether the smaller vessels would be able to cope with the voluminous operation orders and amendments, to be opened only on the eve of sailing. It was obvious that full and careful briefing would be essential to success.

Additional reasons for the changes of plan were :—

- (a) The difficulty of maintaining effective fighter cover over two widely-separated areas.
- (b) The exposure of the sea approaches between Tunisia and Western Sicily to flank attack from aircraft based on Sardinia.
- (c) The insufficient strength of the Acid force¹ to accomplish its object² with its left flank exposed to attack from the direction of Ragusa (South Sicily).

Manifestly it would be difficult, if the enemy was on the alert, to achieve a high degree of surprise ; but, with a choice of objectives it was possible to practice some measure of deception. It was hoped therefore, to induce the enemy to believe that the Allies' intention was to attack Greece and the Aegean Islands. Naval movements would be governed as far as possible to promote this deception, which would be heightened by the scale of military preparations in Egypt.

As the final plan stood the attack on Sicily was to be launched in two separate but adjoining sectors of the coast (see Plans 4 and 19) :

- (a) At the south-eastern corner of Sicily, by British forces from the Middle East, Tunisia and the United Kingdom, termed the *Eastern Task Force* (E.T.F.), Force 545.
- (b) On the south coast of Sicily, by United States forces from the United States and North Africa, termed the *Western Task Force* (W.T.F.), Force 343.

The duty of covering the assaulting forces against surface attack was a British naval responsibility. The time fixed for the attack was 0245B, 10th July, 1943.

4. OUTLINE OF THE ARMY PLAN OF ATTACK

(See Plans 1, 4, 5, 19)

The troops composing the two Task Forces were to land on beaches previously reconnoitred and deemed suitable under the conditions of weather likely to be encountered at the time of the year.

Eastern Task Force Landings

The attacks of the Eastern Task Force (General Sir B. Montgomery) were to be made from landings at five places on the east and south-east coasts of Sicily.

¹ ACID force was the northern portion of the eastern assault, whose first objective was the capture of Syracuse.

² The capture of Syracuse, Augusta and Catania.

By the 13th Corps.—(Lt.-Gen. M. C. Dempsey) from the Middle East :—

- (a) To the north of Avola, ship-to-shore assault by the 5th Infantry Division (Major-Gen. H. M. P. Berney-Ficklin), one tank battalion and two commandos. (*Acid North.*)
- (b) To the south of Avola, ship-to-shore assault by the 50th Infantry Division (Major-Gen. F. C. Kirkman). One armoured regiment, one commando. (*Acid South.*)

The objective of the above forces was the capture of Syracuse

By the 30th Corps. (Lt.-Gen. Sir O. Leese) :—

- (c) To the north of Pachino, ship-to-shore assault by the 231st brigade (Brig.-Gen. R. E. Urquhart). (*Bark East.*)
- (d) To the north-east and south-west of Porto Palo, a shore-to-shore assault by the 51st Highland Division (Major-Gen. D. N. Wimberley) and one armoured regiment from Tunisia. (*Bark South.*)
- (e) To the south-west of Pachino, a ship-to-shore assault by the 1st Canadian Division (Major-Gen. G. G. Simmonds) and one armoured regiment from the United Kingdom. (*Bark West.*)

The primary objectives of the 30th Corps were to capture Avola, and the airfield of Pachino and to link up with the United States Forces on their left.

The further objective of the Eastern Task Force was to move northward and capture Augusta and Catania.

Western Task Force Landings

(See Plans 1, 19)

The attacks by the Western Task Force (Lt.-Gen. G. Patton, U.S.A.) were to be made from landings at three places on the south coast of Sicily :—

By the 2nd Corps. (United States), Major-Gen. O. Bradley.

- (a) At Scoglitti, a ship-to-shore assault by the 45th United States Division (Major-Gen. T. E. Middleton), one tank battalion, one ranger battalion from the United States. (*Cent Force.*)
- (b) At Gela, a combined ship-to-shore and shore-to-shore assault by two United States Regimental combat teams (1st United States Division) and one tank battalion from North Africa (Major-Gen. De la M. Allen). (*Dime Force.*)
- (c) At Licata, a shore-to-shore assault by the 3rd United States Division (Major-Gen. L. K. Truscott) and one armoured combat command from North Africa. (*Joss Force.*)

The objectives of the assaulting Forces were to capture the airfields at Ponte Olivo, Biscari and Comiso and the port of Licata.

In addition there were in reserve : for the Eastern Task Force ; the 78th Infantry Division (Major-Gen. V. Eveleigh) and an armoured brigade less one regiment ; for the Western Task Force ; the 2nd United States Armoured Division (Major-Gen. H. J. Gaffey) less one armoured combat command, and one regimental combat team of the 1st United States Division.

By the 13th Corps.—(Lt.-Gen. M. C. Dempsey) from the Middle East :—

- (a) To the north of Avola, ship-to-shore assault by the 5th Infantry Division (Major-Gen. H. M. P. Berney-Ficklin), one tank battalion and two commandos. (*Acid North.*)
- (b) To the south of Avola, ship-to-shore assault by the 50th Infantry Division (Major-Gen. F. C. Kirkman). One armoured regiment, one commando. (*Acid South.*)

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5. THE OBJECT OF THE NAVAL COMMAND

The problem of the naval command was :—to ensure the safe and timely arrival of the assault forces at their beaches ; to cover their disembarkation ; to support and maintain them after landing and throughout the subsequent operations.

The Commander-in-Chief proposed to give effect to his intentions in the following manner :—

- (a) To avoid as long as possible concentrating ships in the Central Mediterranean, thereby disguising the direction of the attack.
- (b) Movements during the approach phase would conform to the normal conduct of through Mediterranean convoys.
- (c) Convoys would round Cape Bon in daylight and be provided with very strong anti-aircraft support.
- (d) The main battleship covering force would be concentrated in the Ionian Sea by D-1, to protect the eastern flank of the assaults. Its movements on that day would be directed to threatening the west coast of Greece.
- (e) A cruiser force, supported if necessary by battleships, would cover the passage of the convoys along the North African coast.
- (f) Strong escort and support would be provided for the assaults.
- (g) All ships were to be fuelled as recently as possible before D-day.
- (h) At night the northern flank of the assaults was to be covered by cruisers and coastal forces, the western flank by coastal forces only.
- (i) Adequate escort to be provided for the follow up and return convoys.
- (j) Naval forces would demonstrate to the westward of Sicily to contain the enemy's reserves.
- (k) To continue to support and maintain the armies to the full extent of their requirements.

6. HIGH COMMAND

The whole operation was to be under a single command and the main Allied Force Headquarters (A.F.H.Q.) was established at Algiers, the Allied Commander-in-Chief being General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Under him, exercising command jointly, were three principal commanders :—

Naval.—Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Andrew Cunningham, Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean.

Army.—General Sir Harold Alexander, Deputy Allied Commander-in-Chief.

Air.—Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder, Air Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean Air Command.

For the period of the assault the Commanders-in-Chief had their headquarters at Malta where General Eisenhower with two staff officers proposed to remain for the "critical period" ; Admiral Cunningham for "as long as necessary" ; General Alexander with the advanced headquarters until the troops were established ashore ; Air Chief Marshal Tedder or deputy—previous to and during the landings (probably 24-36 hours). After the "critical period" was over, the army and air commanders-in-chief would transfer from Malta to the advanced headquarters established at Tunis, Admiral Cunningham going to Bizerta.

Chief Subordinate Commands

The following were the operational commands of the invasion forces:—

North-west African Air Force.—Lt.-Gen. C. A. Spaatz, U.S.A.A.F.

North African Tactical Air Force.—Air Marshal A. Coningham, R.A.F.

Naval Covering Force (Force "H").—Vice-Admiral Sir A. U. Willis (H.M.S. *Nelson*).

Western Task Force

Naval Commander .. Vice-Admiral H. K. Hewitt, U.S.N.

Army Commander .. Lt.-Gen. G. S. Patton, U.S.A.

Air Commander .. Col. T. J. Hickey, U.S.A.A.F.

Eastern Task Force

Naval Commander .. Admiral Sir B. H. Ramsay (H.M.S. *Antwerp*).

Army Commander .. General Sir B. Montgomery.

Air Commander .. Air Vice-Marshal H. Broadhurst, R.A.F.

Naval Sector¹ Commanders

Bark and Bark South.—Rear-Admiral R. R. McGrigor (H.M.S. *Largs*).

Bark West.—Rear-Admiral Sir P. Vian (H.M.S. *Hilary*).

Bark East.—Captain Lord Ashbourne (H.M.S. *Keren*).

Acid North and Acid South.—Rear Admiral T. H. Troubridge (H.M.S. *Bulolo*).

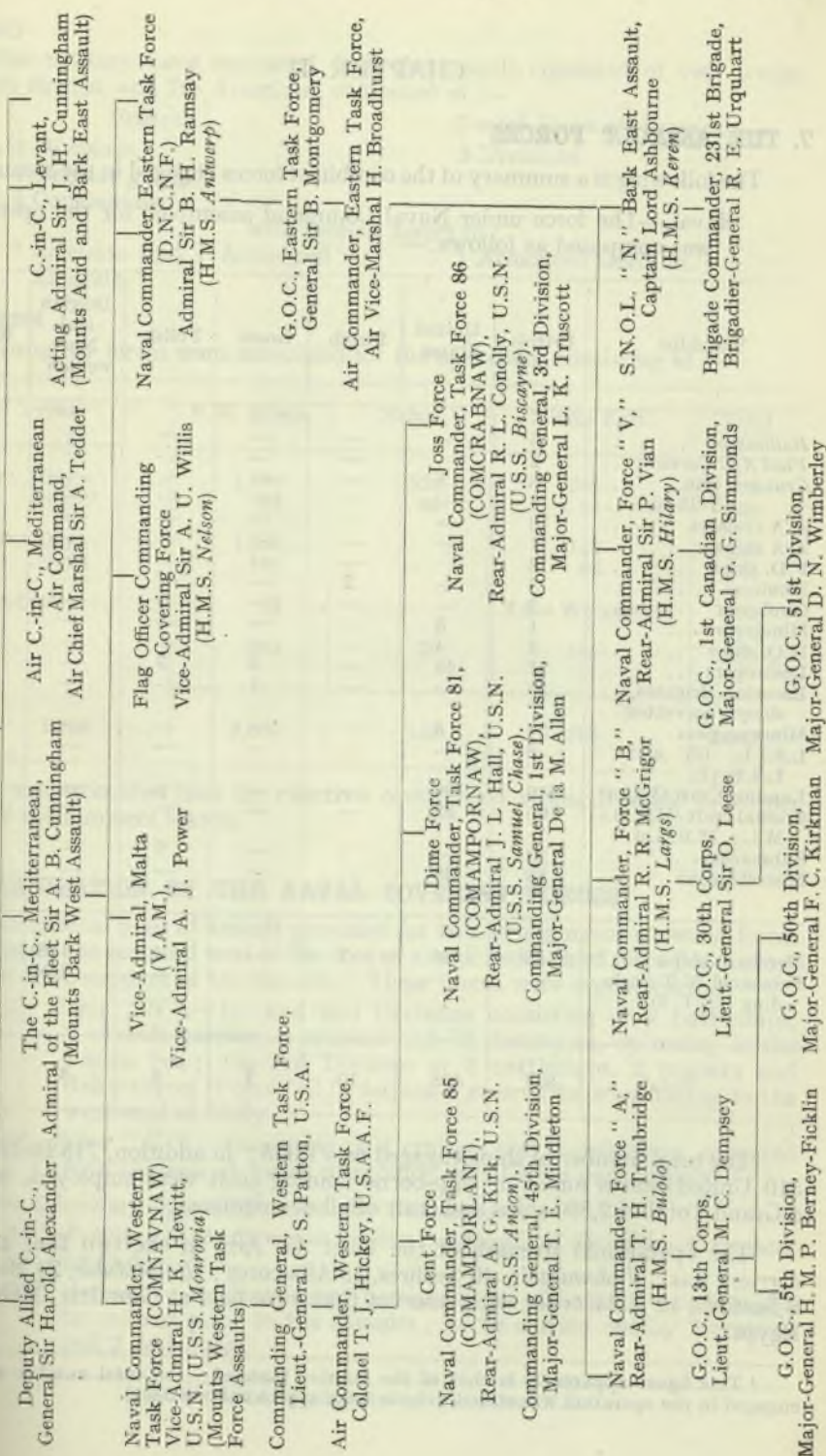
Cent.—Rear-Admiral A. G. Kirk, U.S.N. (U.S.S. *Ancon*).

Dime.—Rear-Admiral J. L. Hall, U.S.N. (U.S.S. *Samuel Chase*).

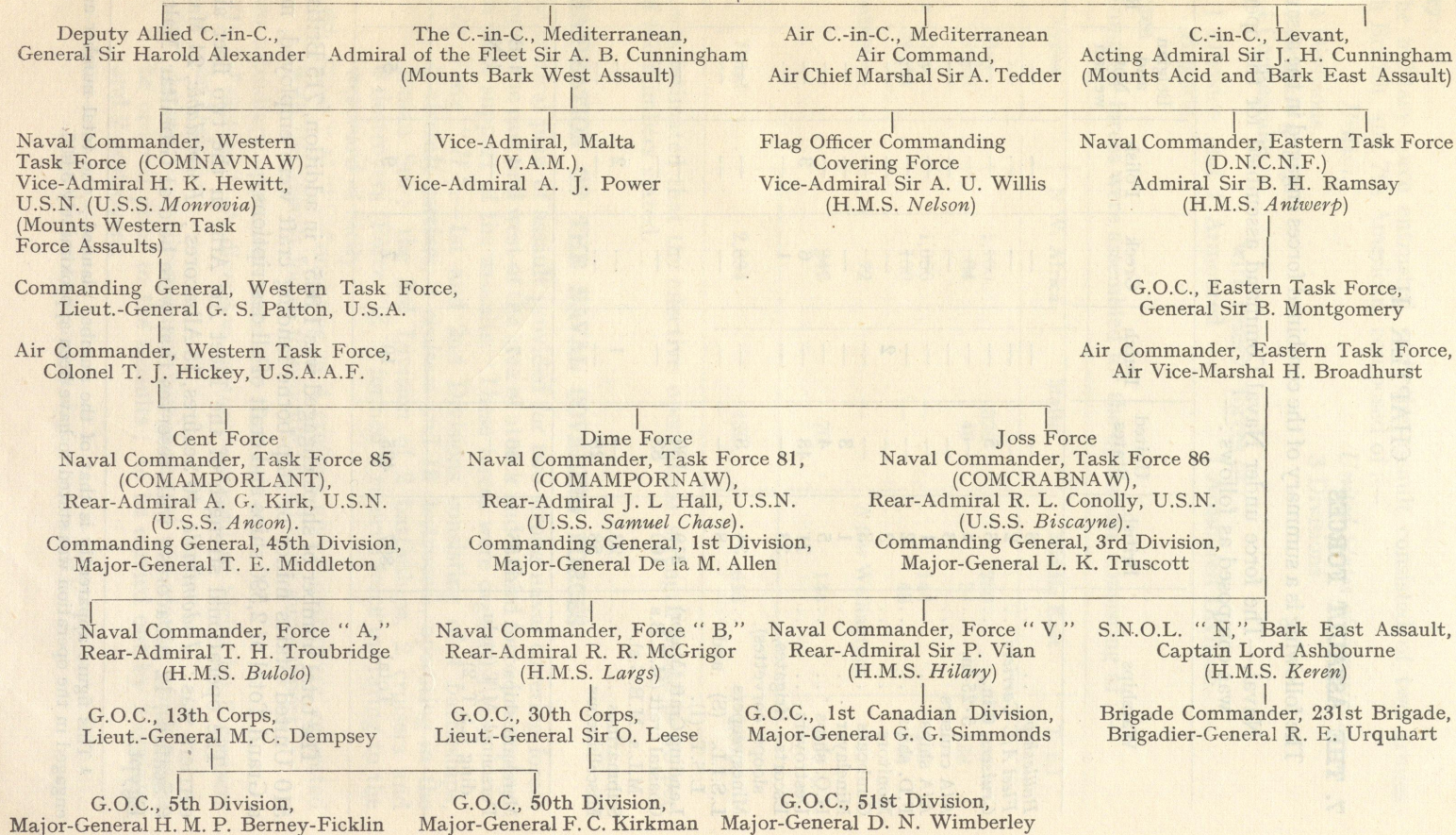
Joss.—Rear-Admiral R. L. Conolly, U.S.N. (U.S.S. *Biscayne*).

Admiral Ramsay (N.C.E.T.F.) with General Montgomery and Air Vice-Marshal Broadhurst established their headquarters at Malta. They would embark in H.M.S. *Antwerp* (headquarters ship), if they proceeded to sea.

¹ For the Sectors see Plan 4.

CHAIN OF COMMAND
ALLIED COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

ALLIED COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF



British covering and supporting forces were organized as follows :—

Force "H"—1st Battle Squadron (Vice-Admiral Sir A. U. Willis)

1st Division.

B.S. *Nelson* (F.O., "H").

B.S. *Rodney*.

Carrier *Indomitable* (R.A.A., H.F.)¹. Carrier *Formidable*.

2nd Division.

B.S. *Warspite* (F.O. 2nd i/c)².

B.S. *Valiant*.

12th Cruiser Squadron (Force "Q") (not operating as an independent Force)

1st Division.

Aurora (Broad Pdt., C.S. 12)³.

Penelope.

2nd Division.

Cleopatra (A.A. Cr.)

Euryalus.

3rd Division.

Sirius.

Dido.

Destroyers

4th D.F.

Quilliam (D.4).

Queenborough.

Quail.

Isis.

8th D.F.

Faulknor (D.8).

Echo.

Intrepid.

Raider.

Eclipse.

24th D.F.

Troubridge (D.24).

Tyrian.

Tumult.

Piorun (P).

Offa.

Force "Z"—3rd Division of 1st Battle Squadron (Captain C. H. L. Woodhouse)

B.S. *Howe* (S.O.).

B.S. *King George V*.

Destroyers (Screen Force), 14th D.F.

Jervis (D.14).

Panther.

Pathfinder.

Penn.

Paladin.

Petard.

Force "R"—Battle Fleet Oiling Force

Tankers

Pearleaf.

Cedardale.

Escorts

Delphinium.

Protea.

Southern Sea.

Southern Isle.

Romeo.

Wolborough.

9. ORDERS OF THE COVERING FORCES

To cover the assaults from interference by enemy surface forces, the Commander-in-Chief proposed to maintain Force "H" in the Ionian Sea and to hold Force "Z" in reserve in the Western Mediterranean, to replace possible casualties, or to reinforce Force "H". He considered that four British battleships were adequate to deal with six Italian.

Force "Z" would also be available to cover the eastward passage of the assault convoys in the Western Mediterranean and to demonstrate against Western Sicily.

¹ Rear-Admiral C. Moody.

² Rear-Admiral A. W. La T. Bisset.

³ Commodore W. G. Agnew.

The 1st and 2nd Divisions of the 1st Battle Squadron were to rendezvous at sea and proceed to Algiers and sail independently after refuelling.

Shore-based fighters of the N.A.C.A.F. would provide protection during passage along the North African coast, and the Tunisian war channel. Air protection would be provided from Malta and Pantellaria for the assault convoys and escorting forces on their approach to the appointed rendezvous positions in the vicinity of Malta.

The 2nd Division of the 1st Battle Squadron was ordered to leave Alexandria in time to rendezvous with the F.O. "H" in the approximate position 33° 00' N., 18° 00' E., at 0630, D — 1.

The movements of Force "H" on D — 1 were to be conducted so as to simulate a threat of attack on the west coast of Greece in the early hours of D-day, unless the enemy moved to threaten our convoys or otherwise offered opportunity for battle. Force "H" would steer eastward at dusk on D — 1, but would remain within such distance of Sicily that if required, it could reach a position of close cover for the assaults at dawn on D-day. Force "H" would maintain its covering position in the Ionian Sea during D-day, D + 1 and D + 2. Thereafter its movements would be dependent on the prevailing situation and intelligence of the enemy fleet.

Cover for the Northern Flank of the Assault

Cruiser cover for the northern flank of the Eastern Task Force against surface attack, until Force "K" could be released, would be provided by detaching Force "Q". The strength of Force "Q", unless otherwise ordered, would be two cruisers and two destroyers.

Bombardments

Force "Q" was to be prepared to carry out a diversionary bombardment—Operation "Arsenal." Force "H" battleships were to be ready to bombard at short notice, but only by order of the Commander-in-Chief.

Fuelling

Dependent on the situation, cruisers might be detached at any time for fuelling, if possible at Benghazi or Tripoli in view of the heavy congestion expected at Malta. The Commander-in-Chief might instruct the F.O. "H" to detach battleships to fuel at Malta in turn during D + 1, 2 or 3. The aircraft carriers would not need fuel at this early stage but at least two battleships should be fuelled fully or partially. Every opportunity was to be taken to top up the destroyers.

Force "Z" Movements

From 0600, D — 3, Force "Z" was to be ready at an hour's notice to proceed to cover convoys K.M.F. 18 and N.C.F. 1. These convoys would already be covered by Task Force 80¹.

¹ Task Force 80 consisted of the United States Naval Forces taking part in Operation "Husky." (See Section 66.)

10. SUBMARINES, ORGANIZATION AND ORDERS

(Ref. Plans 4, 15, 19)

A strong force of submarines (47 in all), was available in the Mediterranean for employment as required in connection with Operation "Husky". It consisted of:—¹

1st Submarine Flotilla (based on Malta)

<i>Rorqual.</i>	<i>Parthian.</i> ²	<i>Osiris.</i> ²	<i>Papanicolis</i> (G.).
<i>Katsonis</i> (G.).	<i>Nereus</i> (G.).	<i>Matrosos</i> (G.).	<i>Nebojsca</i> (Y.S.).

8th Submarine Flotilla (based at Algiers)

<i>Severn.</i>	<i>Torbay.</i>	<i>Shakespeare.</i>	<i>Trident.</i>
<i>Templar.</i>	<i>Saracen.</i>	<i>Taurus.</i>	<i>Tribune.</i>
<i>Sickle.</i>	<i>Tactician.</i>	<i>Safari.</i>	<i>Sportsman.</i>
<i>Trooper.</i>	<i>Sibyl.</i>	<i>Simoom.</i>	<i>Trespasser.</i>
<i>Seraph.</i>	<i>Dolfijn</i> (D).		

10th Submarine Flotilla (based at Malta)

<i>Uproar.</i>	<i>Unruffled.</i>	<i>Unsparring.</i>	<i>Unbroken.</i>
<i>Unruly.</i>	<i>Universal.</i>	<i>Unison.</i>	<i>Unseen.</i>
<i>Usurper.</i>	<i>United.</i>	<i>Ullor.</i>	<i>Dzik</i> (P.).
<i>Unrivalled.</i>	<i>Unshaken.</i>	<i>Sokol</i> (P.).	

French Submarines (based at Oran)

<i>Antiope.</i>	<i>Casabianca.</i>	<i>La Sultane.</i>	<i>Perle.</i>
<i>Arethuse.</i>	<i>La Vestale.</i>		

Operational areas were assigned to the submarine flotillas as follows:—

1st Submarine Flotilla East of 20° 00' E. (Longitude of Corfu). (Malta).

10th Submarine Flotilla East Mediterranean to west of 20° 00' E. (Algiers). West Mediterranean to south of 39° 00' N. as far as 12° 00' E. (Longitude of Pantellaria).

8th Submarine Flotilla West Mediterranean except that part lying south of 39° 00' N. and east of 12° 00' E. (Malta).

The Commander-in-Chief proposed to employ the submarines:—

- As *Beacon* submarines to assist the operations of the assaulting forces of the Task Forces.
- To land small raiding parties.
- To carry out offensive patrols to intercept the enemy fleet should it put to sea.

In execution of these intentions the following orders were issued:—

(A) 8th Submarine Flotilla (Algiers).—Three *Beacon* submarines to act under the orders of the N.C.W.T.F. One submarine (*Severn*) was to be available to carry out landing operations. Remainder (14 submarines) to be available for offensive patrols.

(B) 10th Submarine Flotilla (Malta).—Four *Beacon* submarines to act under the orders of the N.C.E.T.F. Remainder (11 submarines), to be available for offensive patrols.

(C) 1st Submarine Flotilla (Malta).—Two submarines (*Parthian*, *Osiris*), to be available to carry out landing operations.

¹ (F) French. (D) Dutch. (G) Greek. (P) Polish. (Y.S.) Yugo-Slav.

² Fitted for landing troops.

The "T" class submarines, ordered to complete Taranto patrol, were to call at Malta if necessary. The submarines for beach finding and beacon duties were to be sailed for patrol in their areas by 0800, D — 3. Their object was to ensure the arrival of the assault forces at the points ordered; concealment prior to the assault was therefore of major importance and no attacks were to be made on enemy ships other than battleships or cruisers.

Assuming that the disposition of the main enemy fleet¹ remained unchanged the submarines detailed for offensive patrols would sail to take up their patrols by D — 6.

The disposition ordered was:—

(a) 8th Submarine Flotilla.—Five submarines in the Tyrrhenian Sea, north of 41° 00' N., by D — 6.

(b) 10th Submarine Flotilla.—Three submarines north of the Straits of Messina by D — 4. Five submarines in the approaches to the Gulf of Taranto.

(c) 1st Submarine Flotilla.—Available "T" class submarines as arranged with the Captain (S) 10th Submarine Flotilla would complete the Taranto patrol up to a strength of five submarines.

(d) French submarines, if operating, would be confined to the area west of Corsica and Sardinia or to the north of 42° 50' N.

The aim was to concentrate our submarines off the exits of the enemy's main fleet bases.

11. DISPOSITION OF AIR FORCES

(1) North-west African Air Force

Under the command of General Spaatz, U.S.A.A.F., this force was organized as follows:—

(A) North-west African Strategic Air Force (N.A.S.A.F.), under the command of General J. A. Doolittle, U.S.A.A.F., consisted of 73 squadrons, viz.:—

12 Twin-engined fighter squadrons. P.38 (Lightning).

30 Medium bomber squadrons (B.25 Mitchell, B.26 Marauders).

20 Heavy bomber squadrons (B.17 Fortress).

9 Night bomber squadrons (Wellington).

2 Photographic reconnaissance squadrons (F.4 modified Lightning) F.5.

(B) North-west African Tactical Air Force (N.A.T.A.F.), under the command of Air Marshal A. Coningham, R.A.F., consisted of 43 squadrons, viz.:—

19 Light bomber squadrons (A.36 Mustang dive bombers, A.20 Boston, Baltimore).

24 Single-engined fighter squadrons (Spitfire, P.40 Kittyhawk, P.51 Mustang).

Malta, under the command of Air Vice-Marshal K. R. Park, R.A.F., who was under the general control of the N.A.T.A.F., were 25½ squadrons, viz.:—

20 Single-engined fighter squadrons (Spitfire).

1½ Night fighter squadrons (Mosquito, Beaufighter).

1 Photographic reconnaissance squadron (Spitfire).

1 Tactical reconnaissance squadron (Spitfire).

1 General reconnaissance squadron (Hudson, Wellington, Baltimore).

1 Fleet Air Arm T.B.R. squadron (Albacore. Reserve for aircraft carriers, not available for strikes).

¹ Three battleships at Spezia, two at Taranto.

North-west African Coastal Air Force (N.A.C.A.F.), under the command of Air Marshal H. P. Lloyd, R.A.F., consisted of 29½ squadrons, viz. :—

- 14 Single-engined fighter squadrons (Hurricane, Spitfire, P.39 Airacobra).
- 4 Night-fighter squadrons (Beaufighter).
- 4 Torpedo-bomber squadrons (Beaufighter, Beaufort, Wellington, B.26 Marauder).
- 2½ A.S.V. reconnaissance squadrons (Wellington).
- 5 General reconnaissance squadrons (Hudson, Baltimore, Bisley).

(2) Middle East Air Force

Under the command of Air Chief Marshal W. Sholto Douglas, R.A.F., consisted of 17 squadrons, viz. :—

- 2 Heavy night bomber squadrons (Halifax, Liberator), 205 Group under Air Commodore Gayford.
- 12 Heavy day bomber squadrons (Liberator), 12th U.S.A.A.F., under General Brenton.
- 3 Transport squadrons (Hudson C.47, Dakota, Bombay).

Middle East Air Defence Force, under the command of Air Vice-Marshal R. E. Saul, R.A.F., consisted of 18½ squadrons, viz. :—

- 16 Single-engined fighter squadrons (Hurricane).
- 1½ Night-fighter squadrons (Beaufighter).
- 1 Photographic reconnaissance squadron (Spitfire).

Middle East Coastal Air Force, under the command of Air Vice-Marshal T. A. Longford-Sainsbury, R.A.F., consisted of 16 squadrons, viz. :—

- 7 General reconnaissance squadrons (Bisley, Baltimore).
- 2 A.S.V. torpedo-bomber squadrons (Wellington).
- 4 Twin-engined day-fighter squadrons (Beaufighter).
- 2 Twin-engined night-fighter squadrons (Beaufighter).
- 1 Fleet Air Arm T.B.R. squadron (Swordfish).

Troop Carrier Command, under the command of Colonel Dunne, U.S.A.A.F., 28 squadrons (C.47 Dakota).

Air/Sea Rescue.—Walrus, Catalina, Sunderland.

Ship-borne Aircraft.—The following types Allied ship-borne aircraft would be operating in the Mediterranean :—

Seafire, Albacore, Curtiss Scout, Martlet, Walrus, Vought-Sikorsky Scout (King Fisher), Barracuda.

The normal strength of the squadrons was as follows :—

Fighters (British)	16 (12)
Fighters (U.S.)	25 (18)
Medium and light bombers	16 (12)
Heavy bombers	12 (9)
Night bombers	20 (12)
Coastal reconnaissance and torpedo aircraft	16 (12)

(Figures in brackets give the average strength per bomber sortie.)

CHAPTER III

12. ORGANIZATION OF THE EASTERN TASK FORCE

(Ref. Plans 2, 4)

The Eastern Task Force was organized into four main forces, designated "K," "A," "B" and "V".

Headquarters ship, *Antwerp*, Admiral Sir B. H. Ramsay, N.C.E.T.F.

FORCE "K"—SUPPORT FORCE

15th Cruiser Squadron

Newfoundland (Flag of C.S.15) Rear-Admiral C. H. J. Harcourt. } Join Convoy K.M.F. 18 Bombarding Group, Bark areas.
Orion }
Mauritius } Join Convoy M.W.F. 36 Bombarding Group, Acid area.
Uganda }

19th Destroyer Flotilla

Laforey (D. 19) .. } Join K.M.F. 18 Bombarding Group, Bark area.
Loyal }
Lookout }

6th Destroyer Division

Eskimo (D.6) .. } Join M.W.F. 36 Bombarding Group, Acid area.
Nubian }
Tartar }

FORCE "A"

(Acid North and South, and Bark East) *ex* Middle East.

Headquarters ship (Acid) *Bulolo* (Flag of N.C. Force "A") Rear-Admiral T. H. Troubridge.

Headquarters ship (Bark East) *Keren* (S.N.O.L. "N") Captain Lord Ashbourne.

A.A. cruiser ..	<i>Carlisle</i> .	Monitor ..	..	<i>Erebus</i> .
A.A. ship ..	<i>Alynbank</i> .	Netlayer ..	..	<i>Brittany</i> .

Destroyers

Group (P) with M.W.F. 36	Group (Q) with M.W.S. 36	Group (R) with M.W.F. 36
<i>Beaufort</i> .	<i>Dulverton</i> .	<i>Hurworth</i> .
<i>Aldenham</i> .	<i>Tetcott</i> .	<i>Hursley</i> .
<i>Exmoor</i> .	<i>Belvoir</i> .	<i>Easton</i> .
<i>Rockwood</i> .	<i>Pindos</i> (G).	<i>Adrias</i> (G).
<i>Kanaris</i> (G).		
<i>Miaoules</i> (G).		

FORCE "A"—continued

Group (X)

Abdiel ..	Fast Minelayer.	Wishart ..	} Destroyers. ex 13th D.F.
		Venomous ..	
Shoreham ..	} Sloops with M.W.S. 36.	Saktouris (G) ..	} Corvettes with M.W.S. 36.
Sutlej (R.I.N.) ..		Hyacinth ..	
Jumna (R.I.N.) ..		Primula ..	

Minesweepers

Gawler ..	} Join M.W.S. 36.	Cessnock ..	} Join M.W.S. 37.
Lismore ..		Geraldton ..	
Maryborough ..		Cairns ..	
Ipswich ..		Woolongong ..	

Escorts

Pentstemon ..	} Corvettes.	Burra ..	} Trawlers. M.W.F. 37.
Vetch ..		Stella Carina ..	
Convolvulus ..		Islay ..	

Fleet Minesweepers

14th Minesweeper Flotilla

Whitehaven ..	} Join M.W.S. 36.	Cromarty ..	} Join M.W.F. 36.
Hythe ..		Poole ..	
Rye ..		Romney ..	
Boston ..		Seaham ..	

17th Minesweeper Flotilla

Hazard ..	} Join M.W.F. 36.
Sharpshooter ..	
Hebe ..	

Gunboats

Flores (D) ..	} Bark East.	Scarab ..	} Acid. River G.Bs
Soemba (D) ..		Join M.W.S. 36.		Cockchafer ..
		Aphis ..	

H.D.M.Ls.

Twelve boats at Malta.

Support group. Four L.C.F. from Malta.

FORCE "B"

(Bark South). Assault from Tunisia.

Headquarters Ship—Largs (Flag of N.C. Force "B"), Rear-Admiral R. R. McGrigor.

A.A. Ship—Ulster Queen (stand-by headquarters ship) with Convoy K.M.F. 18.

Destroyers

Group (W).

Whaddon ..	} Escort S.B.S. 1.
Eggesford ..	
Lauderdale ..	
Oakley ..	Escort S.B.M. 1.

Group (U).

Lamerton ..	} Join S.B.F. 1 at Sfax.
Wheatland ..	
Wilton ..	
Cleveland ..	} Join S.B.F. 2 at Malta.
Brocklesby ..	
Quantock ..	

FORCE "B"—continued

13th Minesweeping Flotilla (Fleet M/S)

Rhyl ..	} Escort S.B.S. 1.	Rothsay
Brixham ..		Clacton
Polruan ..		Bude
Felixstowe ..		Stornoway

13th Trawler Group (A/S)

Bonito ..	} Escorts S.B.M. 1.
Grayling ..	
Mullet ..	
Whiting ..	

3rd Trawler Group.

King Sol
Reighton Wyke
Visenda
Man o'War

29th Trawler Group (A/S M/S)

Tango ..	} Escorts S.B.S. 1.	Pirouette
Foxtrot ..		Gavotte

22nd M.L. Flotilla (Malta)

M.Ls. (10 boats) escorts S.B.F. 2.

31st M.L. Flotilla (Sfax)

(10 boats) escorts S.B.S. 1.

Support Craft

Six L.C.T. (R). Six L.C.G. (L). Two L.C.F.—From Malta.

FORCE "V"

(Bark West). Assault from the United Kingdom.

Headquarters ship, Hilary (Flag of N.C., Force "V"), Rear-Admiral Sir P. Vian.

A.A. cruisers, Delhi, Colombo.

Monitor, Roberts. Netlayer, Guardian (Malta).

Destroyers

Group V. Join K.M.F. 18 from Bone for the assault.

Mendip (D.21).	Wallace.	Blencathra.
Woolston.	Brecon.	Viceroy.
Brissenden.	Hambledon.	Blankney.

Group S. Join K.M.S. 18 from Bone for the assault.

Farndale.	Tynedale.	Puckeridge.	Ledbury.
Calpe.	Themistocles (G).	Haydon.	Krakowiak (P).

Group T. Join K.M.S. 18, K.M.F. 18 and K.M.F. 19, in succession from Bizerta.

Holcombe.	Liddesdale.	Atherstone.	Slazak (P).
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Group U. Join K.M.F. 18 from Algiers, to Sfax and Malta for Force "B".

Lamerton.	Cleveland.	} Also in Force "B".
Wheatland.	Brocklesby.	
Wilton.	Quantock.	

FORCE "V"—continued

Escort Groups

Group A. With K.M.F. 18, then to Bone to join K.M.S. 19 on relief by Group V.

Sloops: *Crane, Cygnet, Pheasant, Whimbrel, Chanticleer.*

Frigates: *Test, Trent.*

Group B. With K.M.S. 18. To Algiers on relief by Group S.

Sloop: *Erne.* Frigate: *Teviot.* Cutter: *Banff.* Corvettes: *Oxli, Hyderabad, Bergamot, Bryony, Rhododendron, Honeysuckle.*

Group C. With K.M.F. 19. To Bone on relief by Group T.

Destroyer: *Inconstant.* Frigates: *Plym, Bann.* Escort destroyers *Wrestler, Wanderer.*

Group D. With K.M.S. 19. To Algiers on relief by Group A.

Escort Dr.: *Clare.* Cutter: *Fishguard.* Frigate: *Dart.* Corvettes *Bluebell, Lotus, Poppy, Dianella, Starwort, Camellia.*

12th M/S Flotilla. Joins K.M.S. 18 from Bizerta, then to K.M.F. 18.

Fleet M/S: *Espiegle, Circe, Cadmus, Mutine, Fly, Acute, Albacore.*

H.D.M.L.s (4 boats) at Malta.

Support Craft 4 L.C.G. (L) and 2 L.C.F. (from Malta).

FORCES FOR ALLOCATION BY THE NAVAL COMMANDER

8th Trawler Group (A/S M/S) at Malta.

Shiant. Kerrera. Inchmarnock. Eday.

4th Trawler Group (A/S M/S) at Malta.

Coriolanus. Stroma. Cava. Juliet.

3rd M.L. Flotilla

Ten boats fitted for M/S.

105th M.M.S. Flotilla at Malta.

Four boats.

110th M.M.S. Flotilla at Sousse.

Eight boats.

153rd B.Y.M.S. Flotilla at Malta.

Five boats (fitted Oropesa and LL sweeps).

Petrol Tanker *Empire Lass* (100 octane) at Malta.

Small Tankers (87 Octane and Diesel): *Nasprite, Devon Coast, Moray Coas*

13. ORDERS FOR THE EASTERN TASK FORCE

(Ref. Plans 2, 3)

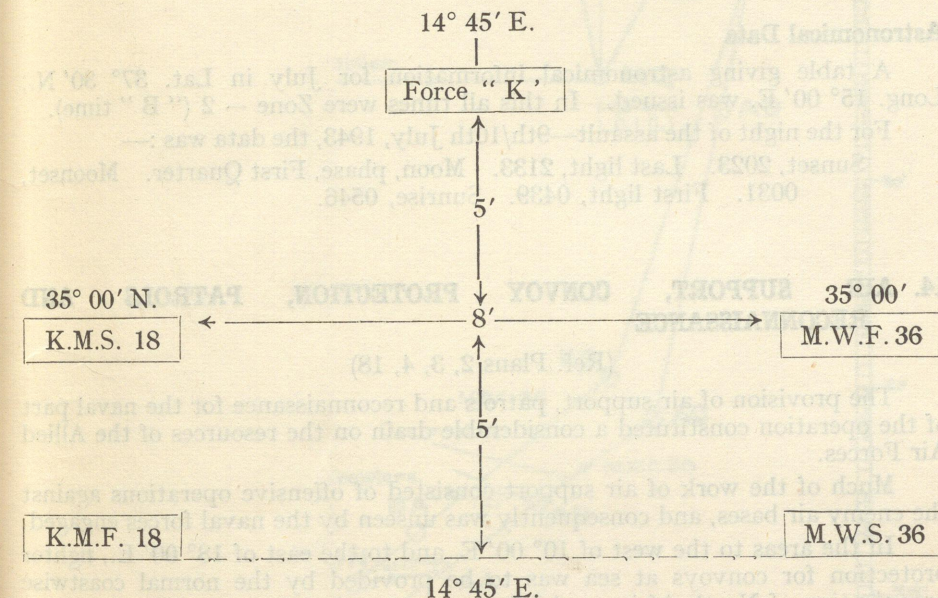
The object of the Eastern Naval Task Force was (a) to land sufficient forces to capture a bridgehead and the supporting aerodromes in the south-east corner of the Island of Sicily. It was the intention of the Commander-in-Chief:—

(A) To bring the assaulting troop convoys intact to within sufficient distance of Sicily, with strong escorts and support to enable the Naval Commander, Eastern Task Force, to achieve his object.

(B) To reinforce, support and maintain the troops landed.

Assembly Prior to Assault

The movements of the assault convoys were accordingly designed to enable them to reach positions as indicated below in Lat. $35^{\circ} 00' N.$, Long. $14^{\circ} 45' E.$ by 1200, D — 1, after which time the N.C.E.T.F. would redispense his forces as convenient for the assault.



The Approach Routes

The routes of the assault convoys were arranged to give each force a clear line of approach to its release position off Sicily. East of Malta, the most easterly course was that of the northern assault forces (*Acid North, Acid South* and *Bark East*), that of the Bark South assault force was drawn slightly more to the westward. The Bark West force was routed to pass west of Gozo to the eastward of the western limit of the Eastern Task force area.¹

¹ The Western Task force convoys were routed close to the eastern limit of the W.T.F. area, except Convoy N.C.F.1, which would pass close to Gozo, keeping clear of Convoy K.M.F. 18.

Cover for the northern flank of the Acid assault would be provided under the operational control of the Commander-in-Chief :—

- (a) By the 20th M.G.B. Flotilla covering Syracuse and Augusta.
- (b) By Force " Q " detached from Force " H ".
- (c) By two M.T.B. Flotillas patrolling in the approaches to Messina.

Diversions

These movements were to be associated with a diversionary operation (Arsenal) to simulate a landing in the Catania area. This diversion would be carried out shortly before H-hour by Force " Q " in the form of a brief blind bombardment of Catania, while M.G.B.s demonstrated inshore to the southward off the mouth of the Simeto River.

Fuelling programme

Fuelling was an important aspect of the operation and a fuelling programme for warships was drawn up in detail. The ports for fuelling were :—Algiers, Bone, Bizerta, Malta, Tripoli and Benghazi.

Astronomical Data

A table giving astronomical information for July in Lat. $37^{\circ} 30' N.$, Long. $15^{\circ} 00' E.$ was issued. In this all times were Zone - 2 (" B " time).

For the night of the assault—9th/10th July, 1943, the data was :—

Sunset, 2023. Last light, 2133. Moon, phase, First Quarter. Moonset, 0031. First light, 0439. Sunrise, 0546.

14. AIR SUPPORT, CONVOY PROTECTION, PATROLS AND RECONNAISSANCE

(Ref. Plans 2, 3, 4, 18)

The provision of air support, patrols and reconnaissance for the naval part of the operation constituted a considerable drain on the resources of the Allied Air Forces.

Much of the work of air support consisted of offensive operations against the enemy air bases, and consequently was unseen by the naval forces engaged.

In the areas to the west of $10^{\circ} 00' E.$ and to the east of $18^{\circ} 00' E.$, fighter protection for convoys at sea was to be provided by the normal coastwise organization of North Africa and Libya.

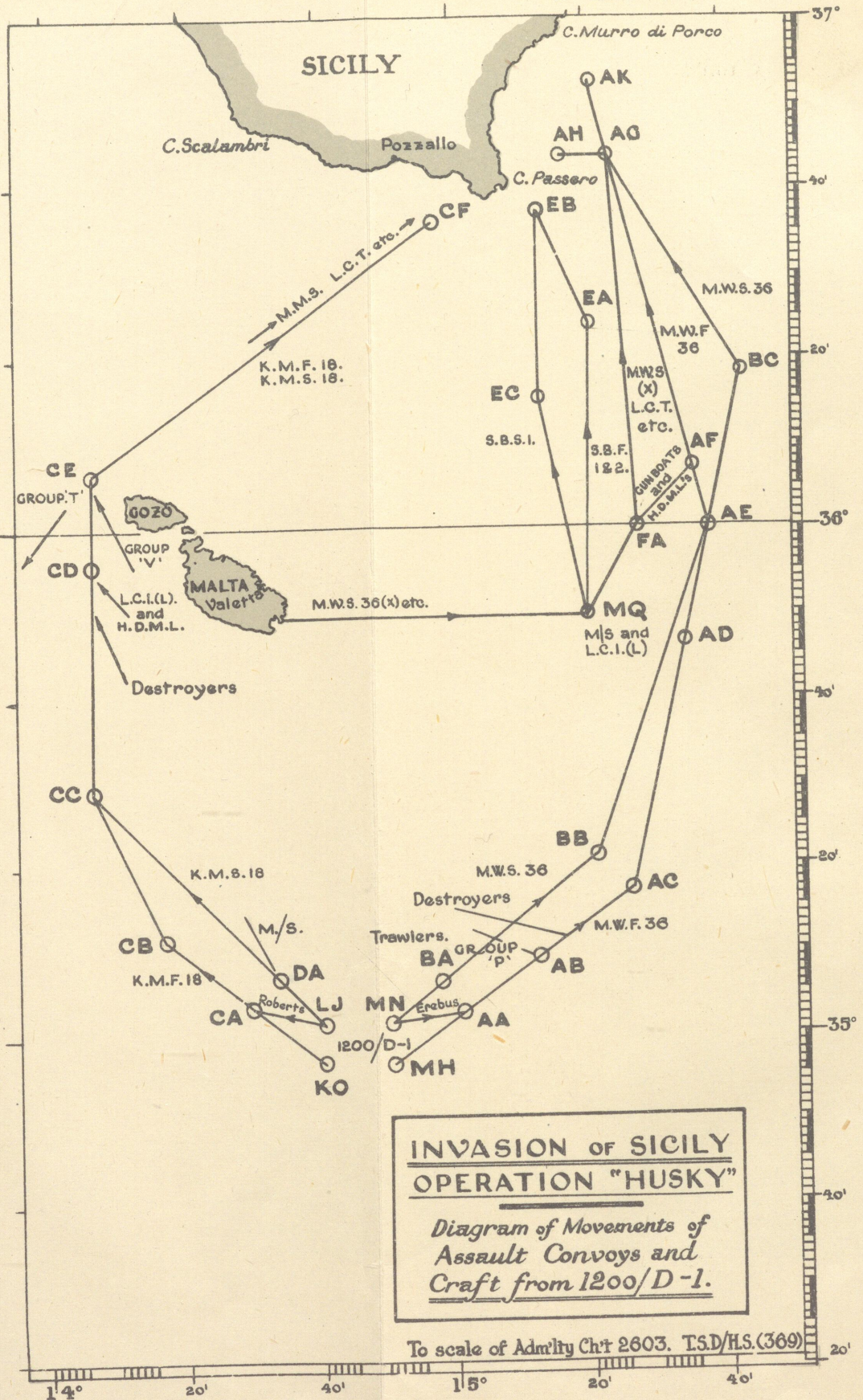
For Force " H " fighter protection would be provided by the aircraft carriers, except during the passage of the Tunisian War Channel, where the carriers would have insufficient sea room for flying operations.

Within the area of operations ($10^{\circ} 00' E.$ to $18^{\circ} 00' E.$) the provision of fighter protection formed an intricate problem demanding numbers of aircraft almost beyond the capacity of the airfields within range.

Where convoys were in close proximity, the available fighters might be concentrated and placed under the control of a fighter directing ship.

Night fighters would be operated for shipping protection within 40 miles of the North African coast and within 40 miles radius from Cape Bon, Hammamet, Pantellaria, Lampedusa and Malta.

PLAN 3



On D-day and after, within the area of operations, fighter protection would be provided to the best extent available, dependent on the development of the situation.

The operation included the use of paratroops and care had to be taken to look out for two groups of troop-carrying aircraft approaching the south-east corner of Sicily after dark on D - 1. The first (150 aircraft) would pass close south and east of Malta and drop paratroops in Syracuse area; the second (250 aircraft) would pass close east of Malta and drop paratroops in the Gela area.

On succeeding nights aircraft would be routed clear of the eastward or westward of the beaches and convoy routes.

Fighter cover over the beaches was another serious problem. This would necessarily vary at the discretion of the air commanders, being dependent on the extent to which the Allied command of the air could be asserted and the disposition and movements of the enemy air forces.

Anti-submarine Patrols

These would be maintained for the protection of convoys as follows:—

- (a) From Gibraltar to Bizerta ... } One aircraft per convoy.
 From Alexandria to 15° 00' E.
- (b) No anti-submarine escort aircraft would be provided within the area of operations.

At night, A.S.V. Wellingtons would patrol to seaward of the beaches.

Air Reconnaissance

Arrangements for air reconnaissance were based on the assumption that the disposition of the enemy main units remained unaltered; i.e., the *Littorio* class battleships at Spezia, the cruisers at Genoa and the *Cavour* class battleships and cruisers at Taranto.

Day and night searches were maintained in the Tyrrhenian Sea, Gulf of Genoa and close west of Sardinia to ensure sighting any enemy forces leaving bases in North-west Italy before they crossed Lat. 40° 30' N., (i.e., south of The Gulf of Naples).

- (a) Block patrols were to be maintained in the Eastern Mediterranean:—

- (1) *By day*—across the mouth of the Gulf of Taranto;
- (2) *By night*—across the mouth of the Gulf of Taranto, and across the Straits of Messina.

- (b) In the event of the enemy fleet passing either of these blocks, aircraft would be sent to shadow.

In addition, photographic reconnaissance of the main enemy bases would be made twice daily.

An air striking force, consisting of three squadrons of Torpedo Beaufighters and one and a-half squadrons of Torpedo Wellingtons (Night) based in Tunisia as well as a few Torpedo Wellingtons based in the Benghazi area, was held available to strike the enemy naval forces should they put to sea. Heavy bombers were also available for this purpose.

Anti-submarine patrols were flown daily on reconnaissance in both the Western and the Eastern Mediterranean to immobilize and hunt submarines converging on the convoy routes or the beaches.

Air-Sea Rescue units were stationed in North Africa, Malta and the Middle East, and ships were ordered to do all in their power to help in this duty.

During the congested period on D - 1, warships in company with the convoys were to display white deck strips on the forecastle bearing the first and last letter of the convoy's title.

Restrictions to A.A. Gunfire

The great concentration of air forces involved restriction of A.A. gunfire of ships and craft during the assault and appropriate orders were issued to all warships, merchant ships and landing craft. They applied only to ships in the vicinity of the beaches not to ships covering the operation.

Naval ships and merchant ships would in all circumstances be free to open fire on multi-engined aircraft not recognized as friendly which entered the Fleet Artillery Zone, but single-engined aircraft would only be engaged if recognized as hostile, or if their movements indicated hostile intent.

Merchant ships and landing craft when lying off beaches were only to engage aircraft after the naval escort vessels had opened fire.

To reduce the risk of friendly naval vessels engaging our own multi-engined aircraft, the latter would be routed when practicable so as to pass at least five miles clear of convoys.

At night naval ships fitted with Radar might engage both unseen and unidentified aircraft with controlled blind fire, standard barrage fire and close range weapon fire if I.F.F. was not visible, or if hostile intent was indicated by the position or method of approach.

Fire was not to be opened above 6,000 ft. when night fighters were operating over the convoys or beaches.

15. EASTERN TASK FORCE AREA

(Ref. Plans, 1, 4, 5, 14)

The boundaries of the assault area assigned to the Eastern Task Force were :—

North-west : a line drawn 225° from Punta Religione (South Sicily).

South : the extension of a line drawn 110°, from Punta Spadillo (Pantellaria).

East : the meridian of 17° E.

North : a line drawn 090° from Cape Faro Lt. Ho. (North-east point Sicily).

The dividing lines between the Task Group Commanders Areas are shown in Plan 4.

It was Admiral Ramsay's (N.C.E.T.F.) intention :—

(1) To carry simultaneous assaults to beaches in the vicinity of :—

(a) *Avola* (36° 55' N., 15° 11' E.).—A ship-to-shore assault by the 5th and 50th Division from the Middle East to capture Syracuse. (Acid North.)

(b) *Cape Murro di Porco* (37° 00' N., 15° 21' E.).—A ship-to-shore assault by two commandos from the Middle East to capture coast defence batteries and assist in the capture of the 5th Division's beach. (Acid South.)

(c) *Marzameni* (36° 44' N., 15° 08' E.).—A ship-to-shore assault by the 231st Brigade from Malta. (Bark East.)

(d) *Porto Palo* (36° 40' N., 15° 08' E.).—A shore-to-shore assault by the 51st Highland Division from Tunisia to capture high ground inland and to secure a good maintenance beach. (Bark South.)

(e) *Marsa* (36° 42' N., 15° 01' E.).—A ship-to-shore assault by the 1st Canadian Division to capture Pachino airfield and link with the U.S. assaults to the westward. (Bark West.)

(2) To support the military in their assaults and in the advance up the east coast of Sicily with gunfire from the supporting naval forces, whilst at the same time giving maximum protection to shipping unloading off the beaches.

(3) To open up the ports of Syracuse, Augusta and Catania, as soon as possible after their capture and install requisite defences to enable them to be used as maintenance ports.

(4) To institute ferry services of ships and craft between Sicily and Sousse ; Malta and Tripoli ; as soon as practicable after the assault to complete the necessary build up of military forces.

The three principal assault areas of the Eastern Task Force, in order from Syracuse to Pozzallo were designated : Acid (North and South) ; Bark (East and South) ; Bark West. Assigned to them were the three naval Forces "A," "B" and "V" under the following commanders :—

N.C.E.T.F.	Naval Commander, Eastern Task Force—Admiral Sir. B. H. Ramsay. At Malta or in H.M.S. <i>Antwerp</i> .	
N.C. Force "A"	Naval Commander, Force "A"—Rear-Admiral T. H. Troubridge. H.M.S. <i>Bulolo</i> .	
↓		
Acid South	S.N.O.L. "J"	50th Division—Captain P. S. Smith. S.S. <i>Winchester Castle</i> .
↑		
Acid South	S.N.O.L. "H"	5th Division—Captain G. R. Allen. S.S. <i>Reina del Pacifico</i> .
↑		
Acid North	S.N.O.L. "G"	5th Division—Captain E. V. Lees. S.S. <i>Duchess of Bedford</i> .
N.C. Force "B"	Naval Commander, Force "B"—Rear-Admiral R. R. McGrigor. H.M.S. <i>Largs</i> .	
↓		
Bark South	S.N.O.L. "Q"	51st Division—Captain N. V. Dickinson. H.M.S. <i>Royal Ulsterman</i> .
↑		
Bark East	S.N.O.L. "N"	231st Brigade—Captain Lord Ashbourne. H.M.S. <i>Keren</i> .
N.C. Force "V"	Naval Commander, Force "V"—Rear-Admiral Sir P. L. Vian. H.M.S. <i>Hilary</i> .	
↓		
Bark West	S.N.O.L. "R"	1st Canadian Division—Captain A. H. Gray. H.M.S. <i>Glengyle</i> .
↑		
Bark West	S.N.O.L. "S"	1st Canadian Division—Captain I. R. H. Black. H.M.S. <i>Circassia</i> .

Assault Forces Sectors

The military assaults were to be carried out at H-hour as follows :—

Area	Sectors	Division	Assaulting Force	Beach ¹ Brick	Naval Supporting Force
Acid, North	Fox ..	—	S.R. Sqn. (SAS) Regt.	—	Force "A."
	George ..	—	No. 3 Commando	—	Force "A."
	George ..	5th Divn.	17th Inf. Brigade	No. 33 ..	Force "A."
	How ..	5th Divn.	15th Inf. Brigade	No. 32 ..	Force "A."
Acid, South	Jig ..	50th Divn.	151st Inf. Brigade.	No. 34 ..	Force "A."
Bark, East	Nan ..	—	231st Inf. Brigade.	No. 31 ..	Force "S."
Bark, South	Queen ..	51st Divn.	154th Inf. Brigade.	—	Force "B."
Bark, West	Roger ..	1st Can. Divn.	1st Can. Inf. Brigade.	—	Force "V."
	Sugar ..	1st Can. Divn.	2nd Can. Inf. Brigade.	—	Force "V."
	Sugar ..	—	No. 40 and 41 R.M. Commandos.	—	Force "V."

The Military assaults in Acid area were under the G.O.C., 13th Corps, those in Bark area were under the G.O.C., 30th Corps.

16. ORGANIZATION AND DEFENCE OF CAPTURED PORTS

(Ref. Plans 1, 4)

In the Army plan it was estimated that the dates on which the following ports would be captured were: Syracuse on D-day; Augusta on D + 2; Catania between D + 7 and D + 14.

The opening as soon as possible of these ports by the Navy would be of the utmost importance. Port parties would be held in readiness to enter the ports immediately on their occupation by the troops.

The arrangements made were :—

(A) *Syracuse*.—The N.O.I.C. (Commander C. M. Evan-Thomas) and a port party (50 officers, 220 ratings) would be embarked in three personnel ships of the assault convoy.

(B) *Augusta*.—(1) A reconnaissance party of two officers would land with the Brigadier, 86 area and the M.N.B.D.O. from the assault convoy.

(2) The N.O.I.C. (Captain E. M. Haes) and remainder of the port party (53 officers, 260 ratings) would (dependent on the situation), be ferried from Malta to Augusta when ordered by the N.C.E.T.F.

¹ Beach Brick—About 2,600 men including R.N. Beach Commandos, for work on beach organization, landing stores and control of traffic.

(C) *Catania*.—A reconnaissance party consisting of the N.O.I.C. (Captain R. E. F. Mackenzie) and 16 officers, 17 communication ratings with necessary transport and communications, would be held in Malta. When the capture of the port was imminent they would be landed either through Augusta or at nearby beaches as arranged by the N.C.E.T.F.

When the situation permitted, the Naval Commander, Force "B" would assume responsibility for the organization of the captured ports, becoming Flag Officer, Sicily (F.O. Sy.).

As soon as a channel had been swept, the following ships and craft would be moved into a captured port.

(a) H.Q. ship : To initiate air raid warnings until organized shore A/A defences and communications are established.

(b) A/A cruiser or ship : to act as radar and A/A guard ship or as H.Q. ship duties if none was present.

(c) 4-6 H.D.M.L.s : for harbour entrance patrols.

(d) Minesweepers : four M.M.S. and four Oropesa trawlers.

Defence Plans

Defence plans for the captured ports were issued to the N.O.s i/c who were responsible for installing any forms of seaward defence improvised from captured material.

The laying of indicator loops and other heavy seaward defences such as A/B A/T booms would be arranged by the Commander-in-Chief.

The provision of gun defences was a military responsibility. The siting of dual purpose guns on breakwaters must be co-ordinated by the services.

Air Defence

Even when fighters and army A.A. defence had been established ashore on an adequate scale, the H.A. and radar warning sets of ships in harbour would play an important part in the defence of the port and shipping.

Instructions were issued governing the use of gunfire in harbour, administration and other subjects in detail.

17. MOUNTING THE OPERATION

In the Middle East the mounting of the Operation developed smoothly, with the exception of the sailing and redistribution of naval stores shipped in the W.S. convoys. Trouble was experienced later in re-loading these stores, for in certain cases it was not carried out in accordance with naval requirements. The assistance rendered by the Middle East Naval Authorities in satisfying requests for personnel, transport and other facilities was readily and cheerfully afforded and they deserve much credit for the subsequent success.

Preliminary naval exercises were carried out between 27th and 30th May, followed by rehearsals with troops embarked between 10th and 17th June, at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba and at Sofaga in the Red Sea. The L.C.A. crews reached a high standard of training, but little experience was gained in the unloading of mechanized transport as only four M.T. ships and four L.C.T. were available.

On 1st July, Admiral Ramsay, (D.N.C.X.F.) and staff left Alexandria for Malta. By that date the loading of stores in the assault and follow-up convoys was almost completed, but at Malta, as had been foreseen, many matters required attention. These may be summarized as follows:—

- (1) Allocation of landing craft by numbers to the Task Groups, involving some changes in the flotillas.
- (2) Assisting the staff of the Vice-Admiral, Malta in preparing sailing orders for about 150 ships and craft.
- (3) Distribution of the orders of the Task Group Commanders and S.N.O.L.s.
- (4) Briefing the ships and craft starting from Malta.

With the aid of the Malta naval authorities these matters were dealt with expeditiously.

On the subject of the orders issued, the D.N.C.X.F. emphasized that it is greatly to be hoped that in any future operation centralized planning will result in drastically reducing the extent of operation orders. In particular the S.N.O.L.s' orders were far too extensive and not of a regular pattern. Such orders should be divided into operational and administrative sections, and any tabulations or lengthy information as well as orders exclusive to certain units, should be attached as appendices.

18. GENERAL RENDEZVOUS OF ASSAULT CONVOYS

(Ref. Plans 2, 3, 4, 5)

Meanwhile the assault forces were on their way and after arrival in the positions laid down for 1200, D — 1, the ship convoys and supporting forces parted company without further orders and proceeded to their respective Release Positions.¹ Cruisers of Force "K" joined their respective convoys and formed part of the escorts. Ships and craft from Malta sailed as ordered by the V.A.M. to join their respective convoys.

Convoy M.W.S. 36 (X), consisting of L.C.T.s carrying supporting arms, was sailed by the N.O.I.C., Tripoli. Other L.C.T.s and gun support craft were sailed by the V.A. Malta. These craft convoys proceeded direct to join the ship-to-shore assaults at the Release Positions.

Convoys S.B.F. 1, S.B.F. 2, S.B.S. 1, S.B.M. 1 were sailed by the V.A. Malta and N.O.I.C., Sfax, with the shore-to-shore assaults to Bark South.

¹ The timings at the release positions were as follows:—

- (a) H — 2½ hours—Fast assault convoys.
- (b) H — 1½ hours—Gun support craft and first groups of L.C.T. (except at Bark West).
- (c) H + 2½ hours—Slow assault convoys.
- (d) H + 3 hours—L.S.T.

The above did not apply to the landing at Bark South.

19. BEACH FINDING

(Ref. Plans 4, 15)

The precise location of beaches was an important element in the plan and for this, four submarines of the 10th Flotilla were stationed to guide assault shipping to the Release positions. Their task was

- (a) To mark the Release positions of their respective convoys;
- (b) to lay navigational aids in positions to assist landing craft flotillas in finding their beaches.

On the night of 8th/9th July, the submarines laid Type F.H. 830 buoys and on the night of 9th/10th July closed the shore and launched their Folbots to gain and maintain their prescribed positions for beach marking.

The submarines then proceeded to positions¹ at 2300, 9th July, whence they could transmit signals as ordered by the Task Group Commanders to the approaching convoys.

¹ Unruffled	..	..	183½° C. Murro di Porco Lt. 6'.
Unseen	..	..	37° 44' N., 15° 14.7' E.
Unison	..	..	36° 37.5' N., 15° 12.9' E.
Unrivalled	..	..	36° 36.5' N., 14° 56' E.